

X-FACTOR

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DAVID
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VILLARRUBIA



DIRECT EDITION

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IN A SOCIETY WHERE MUTANTS AND FORMER MUTANTS ALIKE FEEL THREATENED BY THE WORLD AROUND THEM, THEY TURN TO THEIR FIRST, BEST LINE OF DEFENSE WHENEVER TROUBLE ARISES: X-FACTOR, THE PRIVATE DETECTIVE AGENCY FOUNDED BY MADROX THE MULTIPLE MAN.



BEST LINE OF DEFENSE WHENEVER TROUBLE ARISES: X-FACTOR. THE PRIVATE DETECTIVE AGENCY FOUNDED BY MADROX THE MULTIPLE MAN.

-FACTOR



SIRYN'S INVESTIGATION INTO A CRIME LORD GOES OFF THE RAILS WHEN HER SOURCE--A YOUNG WOMAN NAMED VICKY, SEDUCED BY THE SOUND OF SIRYN'S MIND-CONTROLLING VOICE--IS GUNNED DOWN BY AN ASSASSIN WHO SUBSEQUENTLY KILLS HERSELF TO AVOID CAPTURE. AT X-FACTOR HEADQUARTERS, STRONG GUY IS ABOUT TO TELL SIRYN THAT THE ASSASSIN WAS WORKING FOR A RIVAL, HIGH-POWERED DETECTIVE AGENCY CALLED SINGULARITY INVESTIGATIONS...UNTIL HE IS UPSTAGED BY A STRANGE GIRL NAMED LAYLA MILLER WHO BLITHELY INFORMS THEM THAT SHE'S NOW WORKING FOR X-FACTOR.

MEANTIME, IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE DECIMATION, A DEPOWERED AND SUICIDALLY DEPRESSED RICTOR IS PERCHED ON A LEDGE READY TO JUMP TO HIS DEATH. JAMIE MADROX, THE MULTIPLE MAN, HAS DISPATCHED ONE OF HIS DUPES—AN UPBEAT OPTIMIST—to talk Rictor out of this terminal decision. But things go horribly wrong when the believed optimist turns out to be a “wild card” version of Jamie who loves to run counter to expectations...and shoves Rictor off the ledge himself.

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STAR POWER

GET BACK! GET BACK!

LEMMIE GO! I'LL SAVE HIM--!

YOU CAN'T!

THIS IS MADNESS.
I MADNESS!

I SENT ONE OF MY DUPLICATES TO TRY AND TALK RICTOR DOWN FROM A LEDGE. RICTOR, WHO WANTED TO KILL HIMSELF BECAUSE HE LOST HIS MUTANT ABILITIES...

...ALONG WITH NINETY PERCENT OF THE KNOWN MUTANT POPULATION.

AND INSTEAD OF HELPING HIM, MY FREAKING DUPLICATE SHOVED RICTOR OFF HIS PERCH!

**HOW COULD I HAVE
MISCALCULATED
SO BADLY?**



**LEGO OR
I'LL BLOODY
KILL YE!!!**



**OH GOD...
SHE'S NOT
GOING TO
MAKE IT...**

**RELAX,
SHAKY. I'VE
GOT YOU.**



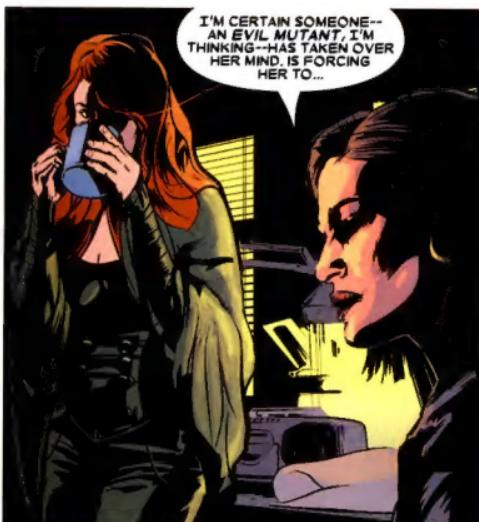
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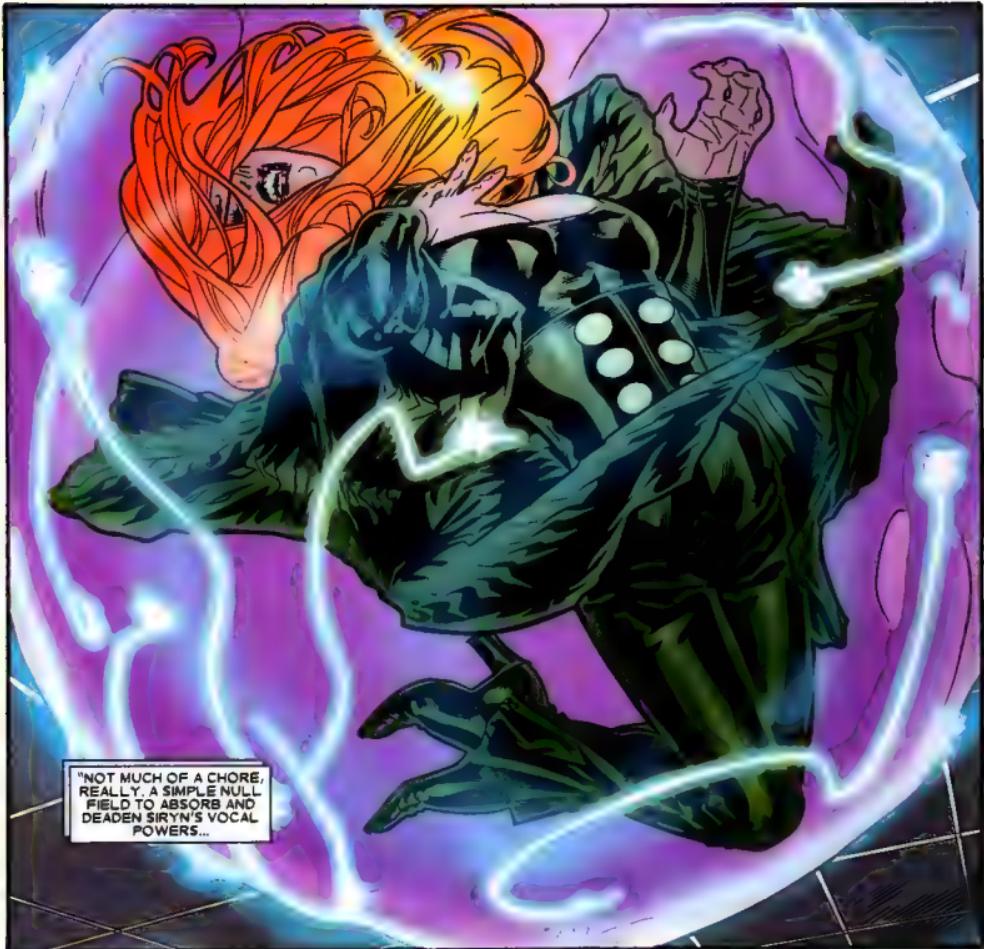














DOES IT AFFECT WHAT HAPPENS WITH MADROX? HE'S FAR TOO IMPORTANT IN THE SCHEME OF THINGS TO BECOME AN UNCERTAINTY NOW.

I TOLD YOU: I DON'T KNOW

YOU PICKED A POOR TIME TO BECOME INDECISIVE, OLD MAN.

YOU TOLD ME THAT, AS A RESULT OF X-FACTOR'S ACTIONS...

THE DISENFRANCHISED MUTANTS WOULD BE RE-EMPOWERED, YES. WHICH WOULD NATURALLY PUT US IN OPPOSITION TO MADROX AND HIS ASSOCIATES.

BUT IF THINGS HAVE CHANGED...WHO KNOWS? IT COULD BE, X-FACTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO...

...UNLESS WE INTERFERE WITH THEM, SO WE COULD WIND UP CUTTING OUR OWN THROATS.

THEORETICALLY.

WONDERFUL.

LOOK, OLD MAN, SORT MATTERS OUT ON YOUR END AND GET BACK TO ME WITH BETTER INTEL, ALL RIGHT?

A LITTLE RESPECT, TRY. I'M NOT YOUR MESSENGER BOY.
SORT MATTERS OUT, PRETTY PLEASE WITH SUGAR ON IT. BETTER.

WHY DOES BEING EVIL NEED TO BE THIS MUCH WORK?

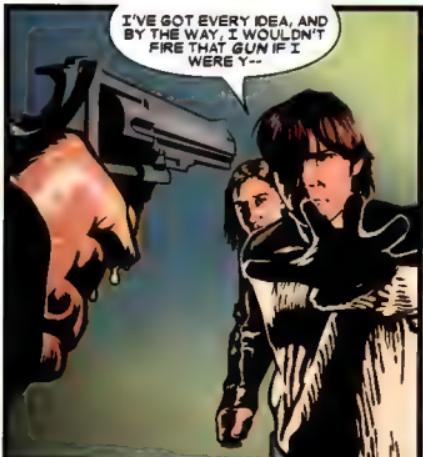


KNOCK KNOCK













THIS...
THIS CAN'T BE
RIGHT...

IT MOST
DEFINITELY IS,
AND IT CERTAINLY
EXPLAINS HER
"PERSONALITY
CHANGE."



BUT... BUT
RACHEL IS SO...
SO MODEST! SO...

I DON'T
MEAN TO SOUND
UNSYMPATHETIC...

...NOT THAT
I AM SYMPATHETIC.
I'M NOT. I JUST WISH
I HID IT BETTER.

THE
POINT IS...



...SHE WOULDN'T BE THE
FIRST GIRL TO GIVE IT
UP FOR AN ARTIST
MOVIE STAR.

GOD KNOWS
HOW LONG THEY'VE
BEEN CARRYING
ON.



YE COULD
SHOW A SHRED OF
COMPASSION, M.

IT'S TOO
HOT. GET CENTRAL
AIR IN THIS DUMP.
WE'LL TALK.



THANK YOU
FOR YOUR...FOR THE
INFORMATION.

DID THE
CHECK I GAVE
YOU COVER
THE--

MORE
THAN

THEN...
GOOD DAY





TO BE CONTINUED...



X-FACTOR

Hi. Peter David here, and honestly, I can scarcely believe it. When Andy Schmidt first talked to me about launching a five issue MADROX limited series with an eye toward continuing with X-FACTOR if the demand warranted, the notion of the ongoing series seemed a pipe dream. It's not as if fans had been demanding a film noir detective take on a C-level mutant character like Jamie Madrox, no matter how much Andy and I loved the character.

Except I'd forgotten the truism that fans don't really know what they want until it's given to them. *Star Wars* was expected to flop back in 1977 because there was nothing else like it out there. Who knew?

Well, you guys knew, as it turned out. From the very end of MADROX to the first announcement of the new series, fans kept saying, "We loved MADROX, and we want X-FACTOR!" And here it is, along with our first actual letters page. Text has been edited for space, but no opinions have been altered:

To Andy Schmidt,

I would like to thank you for your great work on the MADROX series. I haven't bought a comic book, much less followed a series since I was 12. I guess that was around 1994. Man! That was a long time ago.

I would like to say "THANK YOU" for bringing back in me the joy of reading comics. Something that I once had when I was still a kid. Even if it's only good for 5 issues, I am happy to have experienced it.

Michael Edillor

Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada

And we're glad to have provided the experience for you, Michael...while being able to continue Madrox's further adventures.

Dear Marvel;

On the last pages of MADROX #5 Strong Guy was wearing an anti-Republican shirt. I've read almost every comic that Guido is in and I don't see this as in-character at all. I don't see how it advances the plot. I am an avid follower of politics but when I read a comic like MADROX I'm looking to get away from that sort of thing. I see it as a cheap attempt by the creative team to inject their political point of view for no reason. I've been to Mr. David's blog and I know what his political views are. I've never had a problem because I expected him to keep his personal views out of his professional work. Now that I have to see his political views while reading his books I can't enjoy his work as much.

Ryan Johnson
(Via E-mail)

Actually, Ryan, I had nothing to do with Guido's apparel; it was the artist's notion. Not that I'm opposed to giving characters viewpoints about the real world. After all, should we drop all of Rahne's devotion to God if we get an angry letter from an atheist who feels we're shoving religion in his face? We start second guessing ourselves, and we'll be getting letters complaining the characters have become too bland. Hardly an improvement.

Dear X-Factor team:

I have just seen the new artwork for the upcoming ongoing series X-FACTOR and can honestly not wait for it to come out! X-FACTOR is going to be awesome, I just know it!

Keep bringing out the hits, Marvel!!!

Tim Blanchard
(Via E-mail)

Only if you keep buying them, Tim.

-PAD

NEXT ISSUE:

X-FACTOR #3



X-FACTOR #4



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